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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

INFORMATION REPORT

COUNTRY Czechoslovakia

SUBJECT Zápotocký Striving for Dictatorship

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THIS IS UNEVALUATED INFORMATION

1. A new political crisis of major proportions is developing in the Czechoslovak Communist leadership. Antonín Zápotocký has refused to accept the role of figurehead marked out for him. He continues to impose his personal will in governmental matters and to eliminate from positions of leadership all men of ambition or initiative.
2. Following the elimination of Fierlinger from the government, Zápotocký is now directing his efforts toward the isolation of Viliam Široký. In this, Zápotocký is advised by his new secretary, František Buriánek. If the effort against Široký succeeds, his place will go to Antonín Novotný, now first secretary of the Central Committee of the party.
3. Široký is also being closely watched by Richard (Karel) Hradec, newly appointed chief of the Office of the Council of Ministers. This office has become much more important than previously. Hradec supports Zápotocký.
4. Such old politicians from the Gottwald days as Dolanský, Čepička and Kopecký are tolerated, as they include the ablest administrators, but they are held completely in check by the Zápotocký group of Uher, Beran, Barák, Jonáš and Škoda. Zápotocký's influence has been strengthened by the retirement of the veteran Zdeněk Nejedlý, and by the withdrawal of Karol Bacílek from the government to become secretary of the party in Slovakia.
5. Václav Nosek and Julius Duriš are occupied with the recruitment of manpower and healing the wounds of the currency reform, and have no time for political intrigues. In connection with Zápotocký's drive for power the syndicate organization URO, of

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which he was the founder and chairman, is becoming an important political factor, directed by new and competent leaders, such as Josef Tesla, Jan Kolář and Václav Daubner. URO is insisting that it be consulted on all government matters, and its clash with the party leadership cannot long be avoided.

6. The combined effort of the URO and Zápotocký will be violently opposed by the theoreticians, and it is likely that Koehler, Voda-Pexa and their group will seek help from the Kremlin. Practically the whole leadership of the Czechoslovak Party, including Zápotocký, belongs to the Malenkov group, but that group was and is stressing collective leadership, and it would not be too hard to make Zápotocký's drive for personal power suspect in Moscow. His position there was greatly weakened during the summer of 1953, when he took an independent attitude in order to gain more popularity in the country. Some of Zápotocký's men, such as Gustav Kliment, who showed a willingness to negotiate with the West, are in difficulties.

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